



Mary and Joseph

Read Luke 2:1-7

How does the Bible story of Mary and Joseph differ from the way we usually tell the story?

On Sunday, I said we tend to embellish the biblical account of the birth of Jesus because we are uncomfortable with how normal it actually is. Specifically, I noted that three things in the story were actually quite normal:

- Mary and Joseph were comfortably lodging in a relative's house when Jesus was born.
- Mary gave birth in the large central room of the house because the house was filled with guests, and there was more room in the center.
- The center of ancient homes was where the animals (and mangers) were.

Does it change the Christmas story for you to know that Jesus' birth was quite uneventful (until the shepherds showed up)?

Read Luke 1:26-56

What do you notice about Mary from this story?

Much of what we think about Mary comes from three things in this story: (1) the angel called her favored one, (2) she submits herself to God's will, and (3) she sings a beautiful song of faith. The standard interpretation is that God chose her because she was special, but I claimed that she was special because she was chosen. What difference does it make to think of Mary as a normal girl who chose to submit to God?

Joseph: Matthew 1:18-25

What do you notice about Joseph from this story?

Based on a couple other references to Joseph in the New Testament, it's clear that he too was just a normal guy who was willing to submit himself to God's will, and that leads to our final question.

Take it Home

Mary and Joseph were just normal people until God stepped into their lives and ruined everything. But then, by submitting to God's will, they were able to experience something awesome. Christmas is the story of God ruining people's normal to bring about something awesome.

What does that mean to you these days?



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